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ABSTRACT

An examination of the "Los Angeles Times," the "Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram," the "Register," and the "Herald Examiner" as well as personal interviews conducted at the editorial and management levels reveal the effect of changing American social values. Changing values can be marked by such broad indicators as graphic renovation, regionalization of news content, creation of special sections wholly devoted to leisure and/or segmented audience interests, as well as such subtle alterations as the refinement of tables of contents, increases in news brief sections, changes in women's coverage, sectionalization, and increases in feature and entertainment materials. In addition, the management and marketing techniques of newspapers have changed. Most metropolitan area newspapers now utilize market research as an integral decision-making tool in the daily management of their newspapers. Others have established internal autonomous research departments to monitor the change taking place in the communities that they serve. The marketing of newspapers has also changed as owners seek the best possible position for their product in a fiercely competitive media environment. Most of these changes have occurred within the past three to five years. (HOD)

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THE EFFECT OF CHANGING AMERICAN SOCIAL VALUES ON THE EDITORIAL CONTENT, STYLE AND MANAGEMENT OF NEWSPAPERS

by

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AN OPENING THOUGHT

In a 1977 comment by Robert G. Marbut, President of the Harte-Hanks Newspaper group, the philosophy underlying this research was found:*

"...our changing society is having a dramatic influence on the informational needs of the market place. The trend is toward greater fragmentation...more specialization. The homogeneous mass audience of yesterday is giving way to the heterogeneous audience of tomorrow...

"Therefore, in order to respond effectively to both the opportunities and threats implicit in this scenario, the newspaper can no longer count on the haphazard approach of yesterday. Instead, a new approach is required---the marketing approach--- in which the needs of the customers become the central concern."

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*Quotation reported in Ernest F. Larkin, Gerald L. Grotta and Phillip Stout, "The 21-34 Year Old Market and the Daily Newspaper," ANPA News Research Report, No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association, 1977), pp. 6-7.

PREFACE

To study, describe and document changes in social values is like trying to study the wind. We know it is there, but we can't quite "see" it. We can document its historical pattern, but when we are in the middle of the "storm," it is difficult to gain an accurate perspective, and next to impossible to forecast. One sociological study begins with this insight: "The hardest transition to see is the one we are in."[1] Further, once we think we have gained some valuable insights into the situation, the situation changes (the wind shifts) and we must begin our study over again.

Such is the predicament in which I found myself as I conducted research for this paper. The body of literature (both quantitative and qualitative) in the area of values is large. However, each author representing each discipline takes a different view of value change and how it affects his or her particular field of study. Psychologists view changes in individual thought, sociologists view holistic shifts in social patterns, and anthropologists view the various cultural changes. The battery of discipline-biased surveys and tests is enormous; their differences in results are equally enormous.

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[1]Harlan Cleveland and Thomas W. Wilson, Jr. Humangrowth: An Essay on Growth, Values and the Quality of Life (Palo Alto, CA: Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, 1978), p. 1.

As I began this paper, I, too, began with a field bias. I was searching for shifts in social values that may be related specifically to noticeable changes in the newspaper industry. I searched through a large body of literature and then chose the research that best fit my objectives. Of course, the bias inherent in that approach is evident. Social change is neither static nor monolithic. It is complex, changing and pervasive among all aspects of society. To link several dynamic social variables to several defined (but also dynamic) changes in the newspaper industry is, therefore, a dangerous proposition. However, it is a challenging and an interesting one, and one on which this paper is based.

While there seems to be strong evidence to support the conclusions I have drawn in this paper, the reader should be aware that the issues are certainly more complex than I've presented here. Changes in any society, any industry, are almost certain to be linked to more than one cause. However, with the restricted scope and length of this paper in mind, the cause-effect relationships drawn within it provide a definite, but I hope, enlightening perspective.

INTRODUCTION

The newspaper industry has been facing difficulties for some time now. According to media researcher Gerald Grotta, the two basic indicators of growth in the daily newspaper industry---advertising and circulation---have shown downward trends since the 1950s.[1] Grotta points out that from 1946 to 1950, newspaper advertising grew more than twice as rapidly as the Gross National Product (GNP). However, from 1960 to 1970, newspaper advertising grew only 58%, while GNP grew 94%. The same relative decline can be seen in circulation. Although from 1920 to 1950, newspaper circulation grew at a much faster rate than population, after 1950, the rate steadily slowed, and through the sixties, newspaper circulation was unable to keep up with the growing number of households.[2] The problems continued through the seventies as well, much to the chagrin of an already financially strapped

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[1]Gerald L. Grotta, "Prosperous Newspaper Industry May Be Heading for Decline," Journalism Quarterly 51 (Autumn 1974):499. Statistics for advertising growth rates prior to 1946 were not given in Grotta's article, and I found no similar comparisons elsewhere.

[2]Ibid., p. 499.

industry.[3] In addition, lengthy labor disputes and increases in the costs of paper and equipment added significantly to the industry's difficulties.

These problems did not go unnoticed; the decline in circulation and advertising growth spurred much interest and concern among many groups. When the downward trends first became obvious during the sixties, newspaper owners and media researchers began to search for answers as to why these trends were taking place. Some blamed it on declining literacy rates. Others blamed the rising popularity of television and fierce competition among media for the valuable time of their users.[4] Still others looked at more philosophical questions. Was the print medium dying with the development of electronic media? Were the business practices of newspapers lagging behind modern marketing and industry management techniques? Were the changing needs of American readers no longer being met by the

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[3]Fergus M. Bordewich. "Supermarketing the Newspaper," Columbia Journalism Review 16 (September/October 1977):24; Ernest F. Larkin, Gerald L. Grotta and Phillip Stout, "The 21-34 Year Old Market and the Daily Newspaper," ANPA News Research Report, No. 1 (Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Assn.), 1977, p. 1; and Edward H. Harte, "Newspapers," Washington Journalism Review 2 (January/February 1980):48; and other publications.

[4]Bordewich, "Supermarketing," 24. See also Melvin L. DeFleur, Theories of Mass Communication (New York: David McKay Co.), pp. 1-21, for a history of the press and how it has been affected by other media competition. For a discussion of media competition as well as declining literacy rates see also Ernest C. Hynds, American Newspapers in the 1970s (New York: Hastings House, 1975), pp. 17-24.

traditional content, format and structure of the American press?[5] These were indeed puzzling questions, and if the newspaper industry was to survive and grow, industry leaders needed to find answers to these questions and many others. To find these answers, newspaper management turned to the field of market and audience research.

While the 1950s and 1960s fostered the beginnings of readership research in response to these questions, and many surveys were conducted during this time,[6] these surveys were limited in scope and purpose, and were often conducted with the academic,

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[5]The question of the dying print media was first popularized in the sixties by Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964). Although many media philosophers have taken an interest in it from time to time since then, no significant conclusive evidence has been formulated to support the idea. However, a more recent argument by sociologist Richard Maisel links the decline of print media to post-industrial social change, "The Decline of Mass Media," Public Opinion Quarterly 34 (Spring 1973):159-170.

Questions regarding the business practices, management and marketing techniques of the newspaper industry were addressed fairly early in the decline trend by William A. Mindak, "Do Newspaper Publishers Suffer from 'Marketing Myopia'?" Journalism Quarterly 42 (Autumn 1965):433-442. From 1964 to 1975, however, there seems to be a paucity in literature that discusses the Mindak view. In 1975, newspaper researcher Leo Bogart picked up on Mindak's studies and suggested that newspapers begin to become more market-oriented to define and meet the changing needs of their readers. Other studies have since followed suit. These are: Leo Bogart, "How the Challenge of Television News Affects the Prosperity of Daily Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly 52 (Autumn 1975):403-410; Bordewich, "Supermarketing," 24-30; and Philip Meyer, "In Defense of the Marketing Approach," Columbia Journalism Review 17 (January/February 1978), pp. 60-62.

[6]"Newspaper Readership and Circulation," ANPA News Research Report, No. 3 (Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association, May 27, 1977) lists over 469 research findings on readership and circulation completed between 1950 and 1976.

rather than the practitioner, in mind.[7] In fact, the science of audience and market research particularly geared to newspaper use and readership was not widely used by editors and publishers until the late 1970s.[8] C.A. (Pete) McKnight, Editor of the Charlotte (North Carolina) Observer and one of the early proponents of editorial use of readership research explains:

> Much of the early readership research pointed to problems rather than solutions. There was no practical emphasis for editors. Also, much of it was published in academic journals, and the editors just did not read academic journals...Research results also needed to be explained in terms the average editor could understand. Editors simply were not geared for reading and interpreting statistical data...They needed to know how they could interpret the results for use in their own newspapers.[9]

But in the late 70s, things began to change. With the combined educational and informational efforts of the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA), the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), the Newspaper Advertising Bureau (NAB), and several other newspaper-oriented associations, newspaper editors and publishers became increasingly aware of and interested in newspaper readership and market research. In fact, during the late 70s, many newspapers began to create marketing research

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[7]Jay G. Blumler, "Purposes of Mass Communications Research: A Transatlantic Perspective," Journalism Quarterly 55 (Summer 1978): 219-230.

[8]John Timberlake, "NRC Editorial Research Position Paper," speech delivered to the National Research Council, meeting November 1979, pp. 1-4.

[9]Telephone interview with C.A. McKnight, Editor, Charlotte Observer, March 10, 1981. Mr. McKnight is also one of the founders of the ASNE's Newspaper Research Council.

departments or positions that would not only serve as information sources for potential advertisers, but would also assist the editorial departments in gaining insight into reader preferences, lifestyles and reading habits.[10] In addition to generating their own research, newspapers also were increasingly using consulting firms that specialized in newspaper audience research. The New York-based firm of Yankelovich, Skelly and White, for example, reported large increases in its business related to the newspaper industry during the late 70s.[11] Several new research agencies (3 Sigma and Belden, for example) emerged during this decade, agencies especially geared to newspaper-oriented research.

The implication of this availability of audience research to newspapers was significant. Editors no longer had to rely merely on internal market judgments and "seat-of-the-pants" editing. They could now use marketing research as a tool for managing their newspapers, and in making the day-to-day decisions about what should or should not be included and/or emphasized in their publications.

The reader should not be led to believe, however, that this change was a smooth one. The "marketing approach to the news" was not accepted wholeheartedly by the newspaper industry. Many newspaper professionals called it "Gallup editing" and "news doctoring." Editors feared that the preoccupation with the market and its perceived needs

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[10]The trend toward using the marketing approach in the newspaper industry was traced in Donna R. Downes, "Give 'Em What They Want or Give "Em What They Need," a term research paper presented to Communications 515 students at California State University, Fullerton, California, April 1980.

[11]Telephone interview with Al Yesk, Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Newport Beach, California, March 5, 1981.

would cause newspapers to "lose sight of their constitutional function to tell the public what it needs to know."[12] Others felt that this reliance on the public to determine what they wanted in their newspapers would result in "...flashy graphics, chopped-up news summaries, and fluffy entertainment in place of solid information about public affairs..."[13]

Although the marketing approach has gained a good deal of acceptance in the industry during the last few years, the debate about its effects on the traditional ethics of the news industry still exists. However, an increasing number of newspaper professionals agree that the only way newspapers will continue to exist and to exist profitably is to develop a product that meets the changing needs of its readers, and those changing needs must be determined not only by internal newspaper judgments, but by sound research as well.

Closely related to this recent shift to newspaper management's reliance on readership data is the nature of the data itself and the effect it has had on the newspaper editorial content. The questions asked by the researchers were and are very much related to tracing value changes in America and the effects these changes have had on the newspaper industry. The emphasis of most of this research was and is to answer the questions "Why are fewer people reading a newspaper today than ever before?" and "What can newspapers do to build their readership?" The answer to

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[12]Meyer, "Marketing Approach," Columbia Journalism Review, p. 60.

[13]Ibid., p. 60.

these questions seems to lie in a broad-based sociological and value change that has taken place in America over the past few decades.[14] A discussion of this change and its effect on the newspaper industry form the central theme of this paper.

Purpose of this Paper

The purpose of this paper is to trace the relationship between changes in American social values over the last few decades and various recent shifts in the editorial content, style and management of the daily newspaper.

This study is exploratory in nature and is part of a larger thesis-oriented research project that documents a recent but rapid change in newspaper management, content and marketing--- a change from a traditional emphasis on internally determined management to an increasingly reader-oriented (externally determined) newspaper management style (briefly described above as the "marketing approach to the news").

Methods of Research

The data in and conclusions from this study come from three sources. First, the documentation of value change in America is based on a review of several cross-disciplinary studies (both quantitative and qualitative) that have been conducted from the 1950s to the present.

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[14] A summary of this sociological change and its effect on the newspaper industry may be found in Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc. "Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business---Part 3," ANPA News Research Report, No. 20 (Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association, May 25, 1979).

The second type of source material studied for this project was that related to the changes in newspapers both editorially and managerially during the last several years. Secondary sources such as books, scholarly articles and professional publications were used to gain a broad perspective on the industry trends. In addition, primary data in the form of internal newspaper research reports and newspaper promotional data were also used as they related to the topic. For example, at those newspapers where the market orientation of newspaper management was used extensively, internal research reports placed less emphasis on pure demographics and more emphasis on lifestyle surveys and psychographics. Also, the promotional material that a newspaper distributes often indicates how it perceives its uniqueness among other papers in the market and how it caters to the needs of its specific audiences. These materials were most helpful in determining philosophical changes among editors and publishers in response to perceived sociological changes.

The third type of source material I used was the information I received through case studies conducted at four Los Angeles-area newspapers: the Los Angeles Times, the Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram, the Register, and the Herald Examiner. Sixteen personal interviews were conducted at the editorial and management levels. From these interviews, I gained a practical perspective about the day-to-day management and editorial decision making procedures, and how editors and managers perceive their community's social change and their newspaper's response to those changes.

CHANGING AMERICAN VALUES

The Definition

Sociologist and psychologist Milton Rokeach has studied the nature of human values and value change for more than twenty years, performing empirical statistical studies on American society from 1950 to the present. He defines a value as:

> ...an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence.[15]

In other words, values are the basis for our attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. The key part of Rokeach's definition is his link between values and behavior, a link which other researchers make as well. Sociologist Kurt Baier, for example, says that by defining a value in this way, "...it becomes a manifestation of behavior and, as such, observable and measurable."[16] Such is the philosophy on which modern market research is based. If one can measure the observable behavior of individuals, then one can draw some possible conclusions about values. Of course, the reverse is also accepted. If one can document the values of a

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[15]Milton Rokeach, The Nature of Human Values (New York: The Free Press, 1973), p. 5.

[16]Kurt Baier and Nicholas Rescher, Eds., Values and the Future (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 5.

particular group, then one can also draw some possible inferences about past, present and perhaps future behavior. Whether this premise is valid or not is not explored in this study. However, it is the premise upon which marketing researchers and newspaper managers base many decisions, and therefore, it is central to this paper.

Inner-Directed, Other-Directed and Self-Directed

Twenty years ago, sociologist David Riesman identified a subtle, but rapid change taking place in American society. He termed it a change from the "inner-directed" (valuing self-reliance, primary groups, minimal structure) to the society of the "other-directed" (valuing peer groups, social approval, and flexible values).[17] While many factors figured in this change of value orientation, Riesman attributes much of this change to the growth of mass media in this country.[18]

Although Riesman was mainly describing a change that had taken place during the fifties (which he traced to the beginnings of television), his work remained definitive throughout the sixties and early seventies as sociologists and philosophers used his reasoning to explain the seeming identity crisis, the

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[17]David Riesman, et.al. The Lonely Crowd. (New Haven: Yale University Press, Abridged Edition, 1961), pp. 11-22.

[18]Ibid., Preface and pages 83-108.

lack of certainty about values, and feelings of alienation and apathy that characterized that period.[19]

The rapid development and availability of mass media in this country from 1900 to 1960, according to Riesman, changed our culture from inner-directed to other-directed. In only a few decades, America was not only able to communicate and share values nationwide and worldwide, but each individual became a part of a "global peer group." He could broaden his scope by attending to the mass media to learn what "others" valued and thought. Localized influences and personal convictions, says Riesman, became secondary to "other-directedness." Not only did this change foster a desire to fit in, to conform, but it also fostered a sense of normlessness, as our identities and values shifted from one point to another, dependent upon the current situation or influence. This lack of a coherent, stable set of individual identities and values, Riesman concludes, caused deep anxiety and confusion in individuals. In their struggle between their desire to establish an autonomous self-identity, and the social necessity to conform to an unidentifiable mass, they experienced not only an alienation from themselves, but also from the society around them.[20]

Since man could not easily achieve a neutralization of the anxieties (and perhaps a measure of rebellion during the sixties

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[19]Other studies that supported Riesman's view are contained in the following anthologies: Eric and Mary Josephson, Eds., Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1962); Edward Quinn and Paul J. Dolan, Eds., The Sense of the 60s (New York: The Free Press, 1968); and Abraham Kaplan, Ed., Individuality and the New Society (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970). In addition, Margaret Mead also discusses this trend in Culture and Commitment (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1970).

[20]Riesman, Lonely Crowd, pp. 239-259.

was an attempt at this neutralization), he turned inward to a self-oriented environment.[21] Since he could not achieve harmony with and a sense of personal identity in his social structure, then his answer was to seek self-awareness, self satisfaction and self-actualization. Beyond his own world, it seemed, man was powerless in an increasingly complex society.

The Self-Oriented Society

In 1966, the Rand Corporation gave statistical confirmation of the trend toward self-oriented values first described by Riesman. In a limited, but in-depth, study conducted for its "Futures Research" group, Rand polled seventy-five of the nation's leading technologists, social scientists and futurists to determine what they thought would be the emphasis of human values during the next three decades. The responses showed a distinct projected trend toward "selfish" values (one's own pleasure, physical well being and comfort, economic security, convenience, leisure and self-fulfillment).[22]

A few years later, the research firm of Yankelovich, Skelly and White (Yankelovich), began a much more extensive trend study of value change that would confirm the Rand Corporation findings. From 1970 to 1978, Yankelovich conducted in-depth personal interviews

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[21]This concept is insightfully described by William Glasser, M.D., The Identity Society (New York: Harper & Row, 1971). A more recent recapitulation of the trend to a self-oriented society was offered by James R. Peterson, "Tomorrow's Opportunity: Me or We?" USA Today, March 1980, pp. 29-30.

[22]Baier and Rescher, Values and the Future, pp. 133-136.

with 2,500 persons, 16 years and older, to identify, measure and track social change in America and to determine its impact on business and marketing. To gather data from 1950 to 1970, they used a combination of two research methods: 1) analyzing and synthesizing various polls and other data gathered during that time period; 2) reviewing business, psychological and social science literature to determine various trends and comparing these trends with present indications. The most significant finding which emerged from their work was a marked shift from adherence to what they called "traditional values" to modern or "new" values.[23]

The Yankelovich study points out that historically, the values, lifestyles and overall attitudes in the United States involved a commitment to traditional goals and means. The goal consisted of the desire for success, upward mobility and achievement. The means to the goal involved the Puritan or work ethic ideal, with the following elements:[24]

> Self-denial---Sacrificing one's own needs for the sake of the future, the sake of the family.
>
> Conformity---The need to "fit in"; to be like other people.
>
> The commitment to hard work---as a virtue in its own right.
>
> Materialism---to demonstrate upward mobility through tangible material possessions.

Over the past few decades a number of factors began to alter these value systems (including affluence, educational attainment, new

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[23]Data base and research methods explanation taken from a corporate descriptive brochure entitled "The Yankelovich Monitor," which includes a technical description of the survey technique, and an index to the various trends measured (published in 1980).

[24]Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc. "Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business---Part 3," ANPA News Research Report No. 3, p. 2.

approaches to child rearing, etc.),so that in place of traditional upward mobility and work ethic ideals, Americans have embraced new social values:[25]

> Self-fulfillment---the desire to get more out of life than money; to learn who one is; to acquire a sense of meaning.
>
> Self-gratification---to place an emphasis on the individual, even if at the expense of others.
>
> Self-expression---to demonstrate individuality.

When viewed in terms of percentages, the change seems quite pervasive. While in 1950, just under half the country had adopted new values; by the mid-1970s, the proportion had grown to close to 60%. By the end of the seventies, Yankelovich reports, more than 80% of the population had accepted the new values to some extent.[26]

The Implications of this Value Change for the Newspaper Industry

Summarizing this social change over the years, marketing expert Herbert D. Maneloveg sees important links between the new self-centered values and the styles by which people choose and buy their products and services:

> ...After World War II, only 35 years ago, we faced a shortage-oriented public, still mentally wedded to mutual cooperation and togetherness brought on by conflict, all our people eager to purchase any product we placed in the marketplace. Almost every product and service sold; and with the population boom there appeared to be an ever-increasing demand for whatever "good" goods we could produce...This went on for 15-20 years.
>
> But after a period of time the pace of buying slowed. Mental and economic pressures of world and domestic

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[25] Ibid., p. 2.

[26] Ibid.

> conflict shifted the attitudes of our public. Dan Yankelovich calls it the Age of the Individual; Tom Wolfe labels it the "Me Generation." But whatever the name, our nation became less homogenous [sic] more splintered, self-centered...our publics were beginning to march to individual drummers.[27]

As a result, says Maneloveg, consumption of all products has been affected, including mass media. The seventies saw the profitable rise of special interest (self-oriented) magazines which appealed to an increasingly fragmented market. Newspapers, so long a thriving information industry, suffered from their neglect to change their broad, sweeping content to more specialized fare that fit the needs of each of their local publics. To meet these needs, newspapers first had to find out who were their publics and what were their needs? "Where communications once led [emphasis author's] the public, our new publics (again plural) are now starting to lead communications."[28]

Media researcher Gerald Grotta defined it this way:

> If the newspaper is to survive in the decades ahead, it must do so on the basis of offering the consumer a product which fulfills the needs of the consumer. And again, this requires the industry to define its product in terms of the consumer. The newspaper industry must finally begin to adopt a consumer-oriented marketing approach to its product.[29]

To aid newspapers in determining how they could best tailor their products to meet the changing needs of their markets, Yankelovich included several characteristics of the new media

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[27] Herbert D. Maneloveg, "Marketing---and All Society Affected by Media Changes," Advertising Age, November 13, 1980, p.56.

[28] Ibid., p. 56.

[29] Grotta, "Prosperous Newspaper Industry...Decline," Journalism Quarterly, p. 502.

users which they could take into consideration. Further, they provided suggestions for tailoring the content of newspapers in accordance with these changes.[30]

First, they cited an increased focus on self which looks not at how "I" might fit into the world on a broad scope, but rather how "I" may function in my own local environment, and with my own interests. The Yankelovich research further supports this trend with a few interesting statistics:

--Half the country manifests strong concern about its physical appearance.

--A third of the country is committed to self-fulfillment as a dominant life goal; these consumers tend to be particularly committed to newspapers over other forms of media.

--Self expression values have grown, in aggregate by about 10% a year since the early 1970s.

Second, they see an increasing trend toward instant (and often vicari s) gratification needs. The traditional work ethic value system placed an emphasis on hard work and direct experience. Somehow this effort gave the activity or product additional worth. The old value orientation was replaced by instant gratification needs---the desire for the quick, simple and easy. Yankelovich cited a few examples:

--Consumer involvement in hobbies and crafts such as needlepoint has been in the direction of "kits" rather than from "scratch."

--Attitudes toward newspaper reading have shifted from previous willingness to "work hard" at reading toward new emphasis on "easy to read."

--Somewhere between half and two-thirds of the country looks for "instant" culture---i.e., the desire to be

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[30] The following examples are taken from Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., "Tracking the Attitudes..." ANPA News Research Report, No. 20, May 25, 1979, pp. 2-4.

cultured and sophisticated without working at it, by "knowing" the right words or phrases or by making a purchase.

--Habits of using electronic news media have increased because they provide "instant" news with a modicum of effort.

--At the same time, the ability to find "instantly" what is contained in a newspaper through indices, content tables, digests, etc., is a real consumer benefit.

The third area of change identified by Yankelovich is an increasingly affluent and better educated society that has a desire to be sophisticated and "in" with a small amount of effort expended to reach that goal. They want to be informed, but not necessarily involved; they like to experiment in various areas (e.g. travel, magazine reading, foods, etc.) to gain sophistication and awareness, but they are not necessarily long-time devotees or experts in any of these areas. They cite the following statistical examples of this:

--Half the country feels that knowing about wines and restaurants is a sign of cultivation.

--Nearly the same number feel that being well traveled is also a sign of cultivation; over six out of ten derive status from being well traveled.

--Knowing about gourmet foods, foreign dishes, etc., is considered a signal of cultivation for roughly a third of the population.

--Familiarity with designers as a measure of sophistication and "culture" is important to one out of five.

The fourth area of change which they discuss, and a category quite closely related to the need for instant gratification mentioned earlier, is the increasing constraints on time in our society.

... Simply put, the demand for leisure is basic to the new social values, but it is being challenged by other demands on the individual's time---such as ongoing, home-linked chores and responsibilities. This dilemma has been exacerbated by the

> large proportion of women entering the labor force, resulting in a rise in two-earner families...for whom what was leisure time is being encroached upon by necessary tasks and chores.

Among the consumer solutions to growing time constraints are the following, reports Yankelovich: continued interest in shortcut and convenience methods of all types; discontinuation of certain household chores and responsibilities; and a willingness to substitute money for time---e.g. a willingness to pay more at a convenience store.

The last category of change mentioned by the Yankelovich report is an increased interest in escapism.

> While the desire for self-fulfillment has been a basic goal of the new social values, there is evidence that this goal is proving to be an elusive one for significant proportions of the population...self-fulfillment is less than easily found. As the disenchantment with self-fulfillment grows, escapism---fun, hedonism, pursuits that "turn off" the mind---is likely to result.

Yankelovich observed that efforts on the part of newspapers to provide "escape" and "entertainment," might take the form of increased coverage of leisure, crafts, hobbies, cooking, travel, entertainment, and feature-oriented material. Furthermore, the emphasis on personal gratification from mass media should result in an increased preference for local news over national and international. (Their statistics bore this fact out, reporting that 82% of respondents thought local news was of most interest when reading a newspaper; significantly fewer people chose national and international news.)

Yankelovich concluded, like other researchers mentioned above, that "there is no such thing as the typical reader." The

fragmented, personalized character of lifestyles is also reflected in news reading patterns. One study supports the Yankelovich findings with the following statement:

> ...personal needs are much more important than traditional demographic factors, except age, in predicting and explaining newspaper and television use...newspapers may not be living up to people's expectations in providing information which can be used to have influence on things and to plan their days.[31]

In conclusion, then, these studies suggest several changes that need to be made in newspapers in order to meet the changing, fragmented needs of their audiences.[32] First, the complexities of today's world have made local news more important to readers, who at the same time, expect newspapers to do more explaining and analyzing of world events on a personal basis. They not only want to be able to cope more effectively with their immediate environments, but they also desire to know how the world situation affects them personally. Second, readers want the newspapers to sort out information and to organize it in time-saving ways, including news summaries, good indexes, mini-reviews, standardized grouping of content, anchored features and departments, sectionalization, and regionalization of content. Although readers still prefer a good deal of hard news, they find features easier to read because of the more personal writing style and stronger self-interest content.

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[31] David H. Weaver, G. Cleveland Wilhoit, and Paul Riede, "Personal Needs and Media Use," ANPA News Research Report, No. 21 (Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association, July 20, 1979), p.7.

[32] In addition to the Yankelovich ANPA report cited earlier, a summary of newspaper changes suggested from that study was reviewed in Lenora Williamson, "Study suggests readers want 'caring' papers," Editor & Publisher, May 5, 1979, p. 15.

In addition, readers seem to want a more personalized journalism---stories about people to whom they can relate---stories about people like them.

These suggestions do not relate to content alone, but also to the management and marketing styles of newspapers. For example, while newspapers may be kept current on changing social values nationwide through studies such as the one conducted by Yankelovich, they must also be able to monitor the unique needs of the individual communities which they serve. To do this, they need access to the latest, localized research either through consultation services, or through the development of internal, autonomous research departments. Further, the use of research data must become "second nature" not only to the market researcher, but to editors and publishers as well.

The promotion of newspapers must increasingly be geared to special interests, concentrating on how the newspaper can meet the needs of the specific audiences it serves, rather than treating the audiences as one homogeneous mass.

With all of these suggestions for change well researched and documented, the question that remains to be answered is "How has the newspaper changed to meet the needs of its changing audiences?" The next section of this paper is devoted to answering that question through the case study analysis of four Los Angeles-area newspapers. Much of the material in the next section is based on personal interviews with editorial and management personnel at each of the newspapers. In addition, some data was gathered by reviewing secondary sources such as professional magazines, as well as primary sources such as organizational literature and promotional pieces.

CHANGING AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

Time is of the Essence

One of the most frequent reasons given by the public for not reading a newspaper is the readers' "lack of time."[33] In an increasingly complex society where time pressures enforce certain lifestyles, people are searching for the easy-to-use, "instant gratification," convenient, time-saving products. The newspaper, until very recently, has not been one of them.

As Jim Bellows, Editor of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner states,

> It takes effort to read a newspaper, to read anything for that matter. It takes time. We, at the Herald Examiner, know our readers' time is valuable, and we want to produce a newspaper that will help them save time.[34]

Prior to Bellows' joining the Herald Examiner in early 1978, the newspaper was "bold, black and confusing." The table of contents box contained the names of features, columns, and sections mixed together. There was no indication on the front page of what the reader might expect to find inside the newspaper, and the sections were blurred together without any particular graphic or editorial identity.[35]

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[33] Paula M. Poindexter, "Non-Readers: Why They Don't Read," ANPA News Research Report, No. 9 (Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association, January 5, 1978), p. 2.

[34] Interview with Jim Bellows, Editor, Herald Examiner, March 18, 1980.

[35] Interview with Ray Taylor, Manager, Promotion and Circulation, Herald Examiner, March 18, 1980.

During Bellows' first year at the Herald Examiner, extensive changes took place which not only included the graphic redesign of the newspaper, but its utility as well. The table of contents box on the front page was sectionalized and standardized so that readers could identify content with various sections on a continuing basis. Section headings became bolder and easier to find, and news briefs began to appear under the labels "World, National and Area." Further, leader briefs or headlines began to appear (complete with graphics) on the front page to attract readers to the contents inside. About these changes, Bellows states:

> The American newspaper is often a do-it-yourself job. The reader is presented not with a newspaper, but with the raw material of a newspaper which he has to construct for himself. He often doesn't have the time, the skill, or the desire to do it. We set up a number of "boutiques" throughout the Herald Examiner for different news to help the reader, and different days of the week labeling our software news. We cut back editions and set up an orderly flow of news in and out of the AM and PM editions. We also standardized our make-up with a new, more orderly graphic design.[36]

The Register and the Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram (IPT) followed suit, the changes taking place in 1978 for the Register and early 1979 for the IPT. Both papers, for example, added feature briefs on the front page, and both displayed their tables of contents more prominently, although no attempt was made to further categorize them. The Register began running News Briefs on page two, and attempted to sectionalize

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[36]Jim Bellows, "Update on Herald Examiner," Speech given at Phi Delta Epsilon meeting, Los Angeles, California, November 20, 1979.

the newspaper into distinct editorial parts, although that effort has not yet been completed. According the Market Research Manager Dave Ross,

> We now have Section A, the Metro Section, Sports and Classified, with Special sections (like Weekend Life) coming out on different days. The rest of the content is still buried in the sections. But I think we've come a long way over the last few years in making our newspaper easier to read.[37]

If convenience can be measured by the ability to easily locate information of interest to oneself, then the Times is a prime example. Says Director of Promotion, Gordon Phillips,

> The Times is the only newspaper in the country---maybe even the world---to have eight separate sections in a newspaper, daily. It's got to be the ultimate in convenience for our readers."[38]

But in its effort to provide many sections, the Times also became somewhat bulky. The IPT responded with a promotional campaign---"All you need, easy to read"---to position itself against the Times as a smaller, but thorough and more convenient paper.

The utility of this sectionalization is not just the time-saving feature, however, but the specialization of content as well.

The Segmented, Self-Oriented Audience

Gearing content to fit each specialized market seems to be the strong suit of the Times. Even its promotions stress

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[37]Interview with Dave Ross, Director, Market Research, Orange Co. Register, March 26, 1980.

[38]Interview with Gordon Phillips, Director, Promotion and Public Relations, Los Angeles Times, March 24,1980.

this fact: "When you pick up the Times, you pick up the world. Your world---it's all in the Times." These promotions usually show an individual turning to one particular section in the newspaper---the one that fulfills his or her specific needs. In the Times, the readers have their choice of eight daily sections.[39]

This last summer, the Times expanded its Business and Real Estate sections in response to market surveys that indicated a tremendous interest in these subjects in the Los Angeles area.[40] In addition, a few years ago, the Times greatly expanded its Calendar Section to attract a more youthful reader, one who is particularly interested in entertainment and leisure activities. While its circulation has increased, according to Gail Hyland, no major "effectiveness" study has yet been conducted to determine if, indeed, there has been an increase in its circulation among younger people particularly as a result of this expanded entertainment coverage.[41]

Also feeling the need to cater more specifically to the needs of individuals, the IPT conducted a lengthy study (including lifestyle and psychographic data) in 1978, and as a result, it created several new sections and expanded some existing editorial material. Editor Larry Allison says,

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[39]The eight daily sections are: Section 1 (International, national and local news); Section 2 (Metro, regional news); Section 3 (News Features); Section 4 (Sports); Section 5 (Opinion); Section 6 (View); Section 7 (Classified); and Section 8 (Business).

[40]Interview with Gail Hyland, Supervisor of Ad Sales Presentation and Research, Los Angeles Times, March 24, 1980.

[41]Ibid.

> There were results from that survey that none of us would have ever guessed. For example, there was a hell of a lot of interest in gardening. I think that one surprised me the most. Next was home repair and home furnishings. And, of course, we had several people respond that our newspaper simply did not print enough news geared to their local interests. Oh... and there was another one. Health. The audience was very concerned about health. We took heed of the results because they were so significant.[42]

Shortly after the survey, the IPT created its Home Section containing expanded news on gardening and health (from one column to three). In addition, the Weekend Section was created to appeal to a more youthful reader. The response to an increased interest in local news was met with the creation of the Neighbors section, which will be discussed a little later in this section. While the IPT was expanding its contents and sections quite rapidly, it wanted to be sure to retain its "local" positioning over the Los Angeles Times and to stress differences rather than similarities in the changes both papers were making. Their promotional campaign, "All you need...easy to read," not only focused on the new sectionalized and localized coverage (discussed supra), but at the same time took a backhand slap at the Time's bulkiness and broader coverage.

The Register found in its 1978 market survey that its coverage of local news was one of its strong points.[44] According to John O'Dell, former Metro Editor, "Our metro section has really expanded over the last two years. Before that, we covered city news [Santa Ana] only. Now we cover a lot more in that section.

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[42] Interview with Larry Allison, Editor, Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram, December 8, 1980.

[43] Interview with Kathy Berry, Director of Promotions, Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram, December 8, 1980

[44] Interview with Dave Ross, March 26, 1980.

And, we're the only paper in the area that covers Orange County in depth."[45] In addition to the expansion of the Metro Section, the Register also saw a need to attract younger readers and met that need by establishing its Friday section, Weekend Life, a section geared to an audience that is young (18-35), somewhat affluent, and interested in entertainment, leisure activities, and stereo equipment.[46]

Closely linked to this increase in specialized news is a trend toward regionalization that has been displayed by both the Times and the IPT. In an effort to "localize" the news and segment a large portion of its audience, the Times created its Orange County edition in 1968. In 1979, further expanding its localizing efforts, it made a multi-million dollar investment in a San Diego edition, and plans are currently under way to establish a plant in the San Fernando Valley.[47] In addition, a recent Newsweek article claims that the Times is also sponsoring a major circulation push in the San Gabriel Valley, possibly with the hope of finding support for a future regional edition there.[48]

Although on a much smaller scale than the Times, the IPT has also made some major inroads into the regionalization of its newspaper. Serving eighteen different communities in Los Angeles

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[45] Interview with John O'Dell, Editor, Metro Desk, Register, March 26, 1980. (O'Dell is now with the Los Angeles Times.)

[46] Interview with Dave Ross, March 26, 1980.

[47] "Fat Times in Los Angeles," Newsweek, September 22, 1980, p. 51.

[48] Ibid., p. 51.

and West Orange Counties, the IPT faced a good deal of criticism from its readers regarding localized coverage. "When we read the results of the market research survey, we were determined to make some changes. That's when we created 'Neighbors,'" says Allison.[49]

The eighteen communities were divided into five relatively homogenous regions, and special editions were designed as inserts for those regions. Although Allison feels the Neighbors experiment has been successful because of increased circulation and advertising in those areas, the paper has its eye on the possibility of full regionalization, with special daily editions of the paper geared for all five regions. "However," says Allison," the change would be costly and time consuming, so I imagine we won't see it in the near future."[50]

Sophistication and the Need to Be "In"

Although each of the papers studied had several responses that would fit into this category, none was quite as defined as the Herald Examiner's. In describing changes in his paper, Bellows said, "We are doing all this in an attempt to make the Herald Examiner over into an exciting, easy-to-read, helpful paper, targeted at younger singles and marrieds that have money and are buying things."[51] In an effort to reach this audience, the paper did

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[49]Interview with Larry Allison, December 8, 1980.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Jim Bellows, "Update on Herald Examiner."

several things. First, it renovated its Style Section, giving it a daily theme that would be oriented to younger, career-minded individuals. Monday was designated "Woman," Tuesday "Culture," Wednesday "Home," Thursday "Fashion," Friday "Movies," Saturday "Television" and Sunday "Sound." "The sections were designed," says Bellows, "to help our readers cope with the world around them. Our value is to shoulder some of the complication for our readers." [52]

Part of the growing desire for sophistication and cachet is the desire to be knowledgeable about opinion leaders. Responding to this desire, Bellows instituted "Page Two," an entertainment-oriented column that gossips about people in the news. Bellows claims that his Page Two format is one of the most popular items in the paper. [53]

Clearly appealing to sophistication needs, the Times has expanded its travel, home and food coverage, running monthly features (in great length, at times) about good wines, gourmet food, luxury and/or budget travel, and home decorating. [54]

In 1979, the Register took a large step to increase its "sophisticated" appeal. It purchased the New York Times News Service, and widely publicized the fact that it had hired "the best reporters and editors, columnists and writers the New York Times had to offer...By adding the New York Times wire to its

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[52] Jim Bellows, "Update on Herald Examiner."

[53] Interview with Jim Bellows, March 18, 1980.

[54] Interview with Gordon Phillips, March 24, 1980.

already abundant resources, the Register increased the breadth, depth, erudition, insight, wit and style of its world and national news and commentary."[55]

The IPT discovered in quite a different way the desire for sophistication and inclusion that its readers manifested. Promotion Director Kathy Berry tells this amusing story: "We hired an advertising agency a few years ago to come up with a slogan that would be illustrated by real IPT readers holding a copy of the newspaper. What a mistake!" The slogan itself was okay, but when the pictures of IPT readers and the slogan were combined, it was embarrassing. "The agency had coined the slogan: 'I get everything I need from the Independent Press-Telegram---and more.' When the photographers went to photograph 'real IPT readers,' they found elderly folks, factory workers, and waitresses reading the paper---people who work or live downtown near the plant. They also found a few derelicts reading the paper." They snapped "the real thing." When photos and slogan were combined, the result was not successful. People complained about being included with "those people" as representative of IPT readers, and they pointed out the sexual undertones of the slogan when combined with the smiling faces of the readers. "The campaign was a disaster," said Berry. "People just didn't want to be associated with the type of person they saw reading the IPT---even when they were the ones in the photos! They would rather have been pictured in ties and suits and carrying their briefcases."[56] The promotion was short-lived, and the IPT soon turned to other campaigns that pictured its readers in a more "favorable" light.

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[55]Quote taken from promotional literature, Register.

[56]Interview with Kathy Berry, Promotion Director, Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram, December 8, 1980.

In keeping with readers' desires to be sophisticated and "in," the Newspaper Advertising Bureau recently released its series of new promotional ads which specifically capitalize on this idea. Readers are advised to "Buzz Off," and "Wise Up." The "Buzz Off" ad suggests they "Get out of town, see new places, read the travel features for ideas, etc." "Wise Up" tells readers: "Don't be the last on your block to know what's going on. Have witty, insightful things to say at cookouts, business luncheons, even in conversations with your spouse..."[57]

The Growth of Escapism

The desire to be entertained by the media ranks high for all ages and levels of media users.[58] As Yankelovich indicated in its study, this entertainment is a form of escapism from the rigors of daily life.[59] Efforts by newspapers to provide this escapism have come in the form of increased feature and entertainment coverage, and more space dedicated to leisure, crafts and hobbies.

For example, IPT Editor Larry Allison quoted several national studies and its own in-house research that have indicated subscription and single-sales increases as much as 20% occur when a

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[57]"Readership Project promotional ads seek daily readers." Presstime, December 1980, p. 31.

[58]Lee B. Becker; Erik L. Collins; and Jeffrey W. Fruit. "Personal Motivations and Newspaper Readership." ANPA News Research Report, No. 26. (Washington, D.C.: American Newspaper Publishers Association, May 23, 1980), pp. 6, 8.

[59]Yankelovich, "Tracking the Attitudes...," ANPA News Research Report, No. 20, p. 3.

television guide in a small booklet format is included in a newspaper. "Many people, it has been shown, buy the newspaper just for the television guide." The IPT will be switching from a tabloid magazine (currently) to a small booklet guide, early in 1981.[60]

Second, Allison hopes to continue to expand coverage of leisure time, hobbies and travel activities in response to internal research that ranked these categories very high in reader interest.

The Times has done much of the same by expanding its Home, View and Calendar sections to print more in-depth feature material.

The Herald Examiner's Jim Bellows, explains the Herald's approach,

> The journalist's required talent is creation of interest. And the best way for us to go about this is to write about people... how the news affects them, involves them, and makes them feel. The public's circuits are overloaded; they want to reduce their areas of concern. We have got to help the me-decade reader who is hungry for information that will help him or her right now, to do something, or be something, or very simply, that will interest him and her. We have worked mightily to cut back on issue stories for more human, personal, dramatic stories."[61]

The rising popularity and expansion of the Sunday paper is also an indication of this trend toward increased entertainment coverage. All of the newspapers studied had significantly higher Sunday circulations and readership than daily.

One recent study indicates, "The Sunday newspaper is highly popular with readers, most of whom turn to it looking not only for news and advertising, but also for a way to relax and pass the time."[62]

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[60]Interview with Larry Allison, December 8, 1980.

[61]Jim Bellows, "Update on Herald Examiner."

[62]"Sunday newspaper: for reading and relaxing." Presstime, October 1980, p. 32.

At all four newspapers studied, Sunday editions have expanded greatly over the past five years, according to the individuals interviewed. Gordon Phillips of the Los Angeles Times states, "Our Sunday paper is a way to catch up on the weekend what you may have missed during the week. The people have a little more time to devote to it, and they enjoy the relaxation. They especially like our in-depth feature content."[63]

Graphic Changes

The popularity of television has created an audience increasingly sensitive to and sophisticated in video graphics. Jim Bellows offers the following caution to newspapers:

> I used to think newspapers could do it all with smart, zippy design and color pictures. But I learned better! Color TV has invaded every home with perfect register. And TV news is bound to get better and better.[64]

Even though newspapers cannot possibly match the graphic quality of television, they have made great strides in modernizing their design to become more attractive and appealing to readers. Newspaper design consultant, Roger Fidler, states that newspapers must "adjust to changing markets and heightened competition; responding to a world where visual expectations are escalating---with Beethoven on T-shirts and Gloria Vanderbilt on the backs of blue jeans---not to mention color television."[65]

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[63]Interview with Gordon Phillips, Director of Promotions, Los Angeles Times, March 24, 1980.

[64]Jim Bellows, "Update on Herald Examiner."

[65]Roger F. Fidler, "How can we give the reader a better newspaper?" Newspaper Design Notebook, September/October, 1979, p. 4.

The graphic change in three of the four newspapers studied has been quite extensive. The Register converted to a more streamlined, bold, modern look, adding a second color in early 1978. The Herald Examiner converted to its present style about the same time. The IPT made its change in mid-1978. The efforts were centered around modernizing formats, making the papers easier to read, and making the papers more interesting graphically (increasing photos, line art, white space, color, rules, etc.).

The Times lagged begind the other papers until earlier this year when it introduced a new body and headline type. The graphic change was not earthshaking, but Times officials say that it improves the clarity and readability of the news and feature pages, and has a more contemporary and modular look.[66]

Marketing-Oriented Changes

One of the most interesting changes that has taken place in the industry in recent years is an increased emphasis on marketing research, a subject reviewed in the first section of this paper. Although newspapers have relied for years on national consultation and publication services for demographic research data, and they still do to a great extent, the need to be informed about the local audience reading habits, lifestyles and psychographics has given rise to increased interest in locally oriented and locally generated market research, often conducted or managed by the newspaper staff itself, with the help of marketing research firms for data compilation and

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[66] "L.A. Times introduces new body type." Editor & Publisher, August 9, 1980, p. 15.

analysis. Three of the local papers---the Register, the IPT, and the Herald Examiner did not have marketing research departments prior to 1978. What market research was conducted prior to that year was done mainly for advertiser demographics and had little or nothing to do with editorial content. Research was conducted by outside consulting firms entirely. In 1978, corresponding with other changes in management, all three departments were established. Further, two of the papers, the IPT and the Register, expanded the availability of their data from the advertising and marketing departments alone, to many editorial and managerial staff levels throughout their companies. Monthly, and often bi-weekly meetings are now held between market researchers, editors and managers, so that a good perspective of the market may be gained by management personnel for their day-to-day and long-term product decision making.[67]

The Los Angeles Times Research Department was somewhat of a bellwether in the field since it has been in existence for over 20 years. However, prior to 1975, much of the research concentrated on compiling demographic data for advertising sales and for the market position of the product itself. Very little was related to audience research for editorial or product purposes, except for an on-going Reader Panel which constantly measured responses to the product's content, usefulness, attractiveness, etc. The Panel results, however, were used mainly for resource material for advertisers interested in readership of a particular section. However, according to Gail Hyland, Ad Sales Research Manager, much of this changed in the late

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[67]Interviews with Marketing personnel at the IPT, Herald Examiner and the Register.

70s when they began to place an increased emphasis on editorial research, and the editorial staff began to request several specific studies related to product readership and preference. Hyland estimates that the Times still spends 85% of their time on advertiser-oriented research, "because advertisers use it the most."[68]

The other three newspapers divide their time between advertising and editorial functions with advertising receiving approximately 75% of their staff support in terms of time devoted to each area. Both the IPT and the Register indicated a desire to have editorial research constitute at least 30-40% of their research in the near future. Other areas of research include that done for circulation and promotion purposes, constituting 10% and 5% of staff time, respectively.

Additional Areas of Change

The changes briefly discussed in this section reflect some of the areas of value change described in Section Two of this paper. There are many more, too numerous to mention in a paper such as this, with a limited page length and scope. Some of these additional changes are: the evolution of the women's pages, increased publication of digest versions of books, an increase in serialized articles, and an increase in sports-oriented coverage. The list could go on, but I will instead conclude, leaving these additional areas for future studies.

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[68]Interview with Gail Hyland, Ad Sales Research Manager, Los Angeles Times, March 24, 1980.

CONCLUSION

> The newspaper of tomorrow will reflect even better knowledge of its readers...we must use research to reach readers with what they want, and serve them with what they ought to have, and satisfy them with what they deserve to have. The readership studies of tomorrow will be tools, not rules. We will use them to edit our newspapers so that they more completely reflect our communities. We will use them so our newspapers will be for everyone, not just one small group or another. The days of editors editing for themselves are over. The readers have demanded more than that, and the newspapers that will succeed will be those which deliver more.[69]

Indeed, today's newspapers do seem to be delivering more, or are at least on the road to doing so. Some of the changes have been broad and sweeping (e.g. graphic renovation; regionalization of news content; creation of special sections wholly devoted to leisure and/or segmented audience interests). Other changes have been more subtle (e.g. refinement of tables of contents; increases in news brief sections; changes in women's coverage, sectionalization; and increases in feature and entertainment materials).

In addition to changes in content, the management and marketing techniques of newspapers have changed as well. Most metropolitan area newspapers now utilize market research as an integral decision-making tool in the day-to-day management of their newspapers. Further, many papers not only utilize outside research,

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[69] Allen H. Neuharth, "Future Directions in American Newspapers," Vital Speeches 45 (February 1, 1979):254-255.

but have established internal autonomous research departments as well, to monitor the change taking place in the communities which they serve.

The marketing of the newspaper has also changed as owners seek the best possible positioning for their product in a fiercely competitive media environment. Instead of editing a newspaper geared to a homogenous mass population, newspapers are increasingly tailoring their products for a wide variety of highly specialized audiences.

Most of these changes (with a few exceptions) have happened relatively recently, within the past three-to-five years. They have taken place in response to a changing marketplace, and changes in the values and lifestyles of media users.

This paper has attempted to trace these trends in content and management styles and to show how these changes are related to and brought about by shifting American values.

Although the cause-effect relationships contained in this paper are by no means the only explanations for the changes taking place in the newspaper industry, I do think they are well-supported and certainly worthy of consideration and further exploration.

Suggestions for further Study

There are, of course, several stones left unturned in a limited research project of this sort. For example, the Los Angeles market is a metropolitan area posing specific problems for newspapers that may not be duplicated anywhere else in the nation. How widely spread are the changes discussed in this paper? Are

they indeed nationwide? A more in-depth national study of the sort accomplished in this project would yield some very valuable data. A questionnaire approach might also be useful in measuring nationwide trends. Surveying newspaper management nationwide about their marketing research functions and their use of marketing research data might yield some excellent data to further support the idea of a nationwide trend.

Further, even though industry leaders talk of changes in newspapers, how many changes have actually taken place? To study this question, perhaps a content analysis of a random sample of newspapers nationwide from 1975 to 1980+ would be possible, providing a statistical basis for the conclusions reached in this paper. Also, some reader studies to determine the success of recent changes in newspapers would also be warranted. Because of limited funds and time, the newspapers I studied did not always follow up their changes with an "effects" survey, and I think this would be crucial if we want to see if newspapers are indeed meeting the needs of their readers through these changes. Of course, circulation and advertising increases could be one measure of the success of these changes.

The study is a fascinating and complex one, with many possible directions. It is also an important one, for in the throes of rapid social change, newspapers have been struggling to survive in a media-saturated society. To compete well, to survive profitably, they need to continually monitor social change and respond to it with a marketable product.

POSTSCRIPT

When I began this paper, I began with a caution to the reader. "To study, describe and document changes in social values is like trying to study the wind." Well, I have just encountered what might be an example of the wind in motion.

As I completed work on this paper, I sat back and reflected with a deep satisfaction and sense of accomplishment, on the monumental task I had just completed. I felt I had researched, studied, analyzed and synthesized changing American values over a 30-year period, ending up with a well-supported hypothesis that values had, indeed, shifted to a self-centered, "me generation" approach. I then traced the results of this self-centered society on the change in content and management styles of newspapers. It made a nice, tight little package, until...

Until I decided to once more review a few pieces of literature I had shoved away on my shelf for further reading. In the December 3, 1979 issue of Advertising Age, boldly displayed in black type on the Features page was this headline: "From 'Me' Decade to 'We' Decade." In the article, an advertising agency vice president, Robert Rees, suggests that the eighties will bring a change from self-centeredness to collective activity. He says,

> ...We have found that our decade-long march to find ourselves wasn't worth the trek. Out of self interest and for protection we are developing an antithesis to the "Me Decade." This antithesis may be the We Decade, a security through collective acts, a return to the nest or hive.

As a result of this change, Rees says, America will see a greater desire for strong leadership, renewed zeal for nationalism, a wider appeal for generic (no-name) brands, and a stress on marketing products based on their ability to help one be more socially acceptable. He states, "One of Clairol's themes, 'It lets me be me,' was perfect for the 'Me Decade.' The We Decade won't want to hear this and rather will want to hear, 'It lets you be accepted.'"

Interesting world we live in. Just when we think we've gained a valuable perspective and insight, things change, and we have to start our work over again.

But I won't redefine my work yet. After searching through additional publications, I've not found any material to substantiate Mr. Rees' projections. Of course, that's not to say it isn't there...

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Jim Bellows, Editor
March 18, 1980

Al delRosario, Assistant Mgr.
Marketing Research
March 18, 1980

Erma Hasson, Director
Marketing Research
March 24, 1980 (by telephone)

Tom Plate, Editor
Editorial Page
March 18, 1980

Ray Taylor, Manager
Promotion and Circulation
March 24, 1980

Long Beach Independent Press-Telegram

Larry Allison, Editor
December 8, 1980

Kathy Berry
Director of Promotions
December 8, 1980

Philip Meyer, Research Consultant
Knight-Ridder Newspapers
June 19, 1980 (by telephone)

Nadine Seldon, Director
Marketing Research
December 22, 1980

Los Angeles Times (all interviewed on March 24, 1980)

Gail Hyland, Supervisor
Ad Sales Presentation and Research

Gordon Phillips, Director
Promotion and Public Relations

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John O'dell, Editor
Metro (City Desk)
(now with Los Angeles Times, Orange County bureau)

Pat Riley
Managing Editor

Dave Ross
Director, Market Research

Yankelovich, Skelly and White

Al Yesk
Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Newport Beach, California
March 5, 1981

American Society of Newspaper Editors

C.A. (Pete) McKnight), Editor
Charlotte (North Carolina) Observer
March 10, 1981